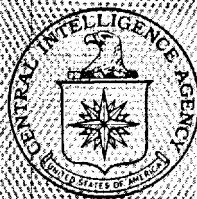


CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Memorandum



THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM

Information as of 1600
11 April 1966

PREPARED FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
FURTHER DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION
CONTAINED HEREIN IS NOT AUTHORIZED

ARMY review(s) completed.

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State Dept. review completed

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Approved For Release 2007/03/06 : CIA-RDP79T00826A000500010068-6

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HIGHLIGHTS

There have been no reports of disturbances in Saigon, Hue, or Da Nang today but a large meeting is scheduled for tonight in Saigon. There may be demonstrations and a general strike in Saigon tomorrow. Saigon security forces have been reinforced. National Police Director Colonel Lieu, suspected of being sympathetic with I Corps dissidents, will be replaced tomorrow. The government's National Political Congress will be boycotted by Buddhist leaders in Saigon and by council members of Hue and Thua Thien Province.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:
ARVN reaction forces are continuing pursuit operations against an estimated Viet Cong battalion which attacked the Vietnamese Special Forces base at Tuyen Nhon, in Kien Tuong Province, on 9 April (Para. 1). US 1st Infantry Division Operation ABILENE, with continuing support from USAF B-52 Stratofortresses, entered its 14th day today in Phuoc Tuy Province, southeast of Saigon (Para. 2). ARVN Operation LAM SON 255-A continues in South Vietnam's northernmost province, Quang Tri (Para. 3). A captured VC document has provided information on the number of Communists in three regiments wounded in South Vietnam during a four-month period (Para. 4).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:
There were no public disturbances reported in Saigon, Hue, or Da Nang today, although future anti-government demonstrations are apparently being scheduled (Para. 1). Progovernment troops are scheduled to leave Da Nang Air Base tomorrow, as the government intends to pursue political solutions to the problems in I Corps, at least for the time being (Paras. 2-3). Personnel changes and attitudes within the military government have been reported (Paras. 4-5). Aspects of the government's

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[REDACTED]

National Political Congress, scheduled to be convened tomorrow in Saigon, are discussed (Paras. 6-7). Buddhist Institute chairman Tam Chau has reportedly retired from active participation in institute affairs for the time being (Para. 8).

III. Military Developments in North Vietnam: Recent photography and pilot reports have disclosed that the Communists have nearly completed another major road from North Vietnam to Laos (Para. 1).

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] SAM site 101 has been noted in a preliminary analysis of recent drone photography. (Para. 4).

IV. Other Communist Military Developments: There is nothing of significance to report.

V. Communist Political Developments: The North Vietnamese party first secretary Le Duan had his first meeting with Soviet party general secretary Brezhnev today (Para. 1).

VI. Other Major Aspects: North Vietnam's official representation in Cambodia is being upgraded to the diplomatic level, which will probably amount to something less than full embassy status (Para. 1). This move apparently represents Siha-nouk's attempt to establish closer relations with Hanoi without drawing an angry response from Saigon (Para. 2). The French Government has upgraded the title of the DRV representative in Paris from commercial representative to Delegate General. The move does not give the DRV diplomatic recognition but it does give the chief DRV representative in Paris the same rank as France's representative in Hanoi (Paras. 3-4).

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Two ARVN companies are continuing Operation TUYEN NHON, a reaction/pursuit ground sweep mounted in response to the 9 April attack by an estimated Viet Cong battalion against a Vietnamese CIDG Special Forces forward operating base in Kien Tuong Province. Eighty-three Viet Cong have been killed thus far (US body count) and 12 weapons captured. Friendly casualties (including those sustained in the initial assault) have been 19 killed (1 US), 24 wounded (7 US), and 14 missing. One UH-1B Iroquois helicopter supporting the reaction force has been downed by Communist ground fire.

2. Six battalions plus one cavalry squadron of the US 1st Infantry Division are continuing search-and-destroy Operation ABILENE in Phuoc Tuy Province east-southeast of Saigon. The ground sweep, initiated on 29 March, has thus far resulted in cumulative enemy losses of 36 killed (US body count), 21 captured, 675 suspects apprehended, and 31 weapons seized. Thirteen Americans have been killed and 64 wounded. Last night, six USAF B-52 Stratofortresses attacked a suspected Viet Cong base area and underground tunnel complex 45 miles east of Saigon in support of Operation ABILENE. US forces were scheduled to conduct poststrike ground exploitation of the drop zone.

3. ARVN forces encountered light enemy resistance on 9 April in the opening phase of search-and-destroy Operation LAM SON 255-A, 45 miles north of Hue, in Quang Tri Province. To date, 33 Viet Cong have been killed and three captured. Government losses are three wounded.

4. A document captured in Binh Dinh Province gives some data on the number of Communists in three regiments in South Vietnam wounded during a four-month period. The regiments involved--the 2nd (VC), the 18th and Quyet Tam (PAVN)--were involved in a total of 19 battles during the period. They sustained a total of 1,135 wounded of which 53 percent

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were serious, 31 percent were light, and 16 percent were slight. Over 75 percent of the lightly wounded were subsequently returned to duty. MACV commented that the document provided insufficient evidence to make an over-all evaluation of casualties but that the percentage of men returned to duty indicates a relatively good medical capability.

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II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. There have been no reports thus far of any public disturbances today in Saigon, Hue, or Da Nang. The Buddhist Institute, however, scheduled a large meeting tonight in Saigon, with Thich Ho Giac, deputy chief of the Buddhist "struggle force," as principal speaker. According to a preliminary press account, some 2,000 monks were given specific instructions for future demonstrations. This press story speculated that there may be some coordination with Catholic groups also calling for civilian rule, but there is no official confirmation of any such collaboration. The embassy has reported that there may be demonstrations and a general strike in Hue tomorrow. Security forces in Saigon, meanwhile, have been reinforced by nearly a regiment of troops from the 7th Division, most of whom are well disciplined Catholics. The troops are under the control of Saigon area commander Khang.

2. US military sources report that the two Vietnamese Marine battalions remaining at Da Nang Air Base now are scheduled to return to Saigon tomorrow in US and Vietnamese aircraft. Press reports indicate a considerable easing of tension in Da Nang, with many of the roadblock barricades no longer guarded. Some concern over the slackening of defenses by prostruggle elements is reflected in a Da Nang radiobroadcast today which requested "unit" commanders to exert tighter control over the movements of their troops.

3. The new I Corps commander, General Dinh, told a US official in Da Nang yesterday that he planned to re-establish Saigon's authority gradually, by reducing tensions in the city and gaining the confidence of various local elements. He stated that he would not remove the controversial mayor, Nguyen Van Man, for the time being in order to avoid a new issue, and that he would give most individuals in the antigovernment movement a "second chance." US officials regard the continuing antigovernment broadcasts by the Da Nang radio as evidence that agitation in the city is by no means over, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] General Dinh's plans to effect a political solution in I Corps will probably do no more than temporarily quiet the situation there.

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4. [] as a result of a decision by Premier Ky and the Directorate on 8 April, National Police Director Colonel Lieu will be replaced tomorrow by General Linh Quang Vien, minister of security and chief of staff to the Joint General Staff. Lieu has long been closely associated with former I Corps commander Thi, and is apparently suspected of sympathy with the I Corps dissidents.

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5. [] a sizable group of field-grade officers is restive over the lack of strong government measures in I Corps, and has identified Military Security Service chief Colonel Loan as the spokesman for this group. [] this hard-line element is seeking several changes among the top-level military, including the removal of Deputy Premier Co, IV Corps commander Quang, and former I Corps commander Chuan. []

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6. Reports from Hue indicate that antigovernment elements are now devoting considerable energy to trying to undermine the government's National Political Congress, scheduled to be convened tomorrow in Saigon. Representatives of both the Hue municipal council and the Thua Thien provincial council are not only refusing invitations to participate, but are calling on other provincial and municipal councils throughout the country to boycott the congress. Directorate Secretary-General Chieu, who is arranging the congress, is reportedly concerned that attendance by some 150-170 persons invited, including political party representatives, may be poor.

7. Buddhist leaders in Saigon, who are also expected to ignore the congress, are reported by the press to have made public a telegram to Ambassador Lodge, asking President Johnson to withdraw

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US support from the Ky government and to endorse elections toward a civilian government. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Buddhist elements now are trying to force the ouster of the present leadership of the Saigon University students' union, which has so far refused to support the Buddhist campaign.

8. [REDACTED]

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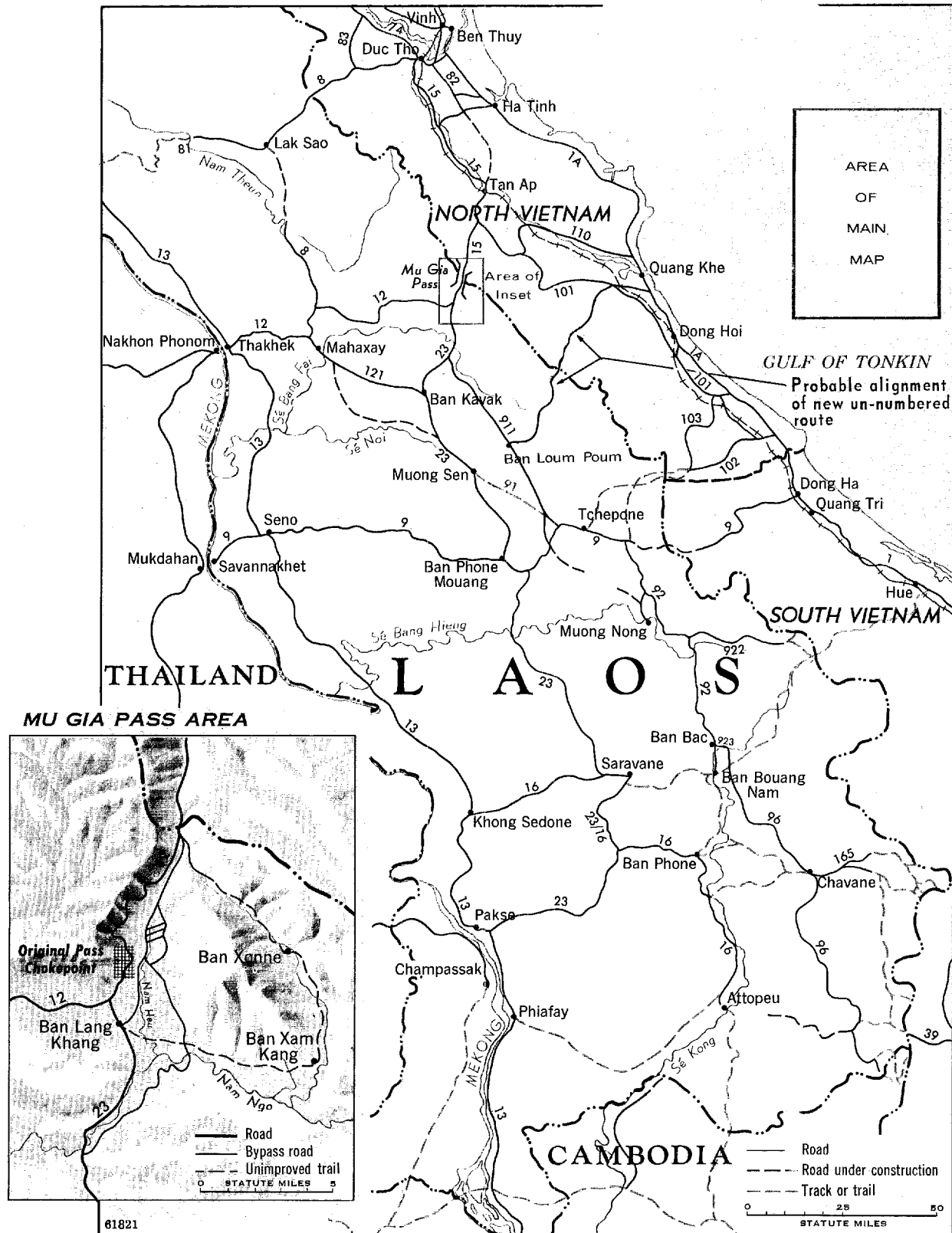
[REDACTED] Buddhist Institute chairman Tam Chau now has virtually retired from all active participation in the affairs of the institute. Chau reportedly did not give his approval to the Buddhist press conference held yesterday, did not attend, and does not agree with the present policy of other Buddhist leaders. He apparently, however, does not intend to engage in an open struggle with Tri Quang or other militants.

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THE LAOS PANHANDLE



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III. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH VIETNAM

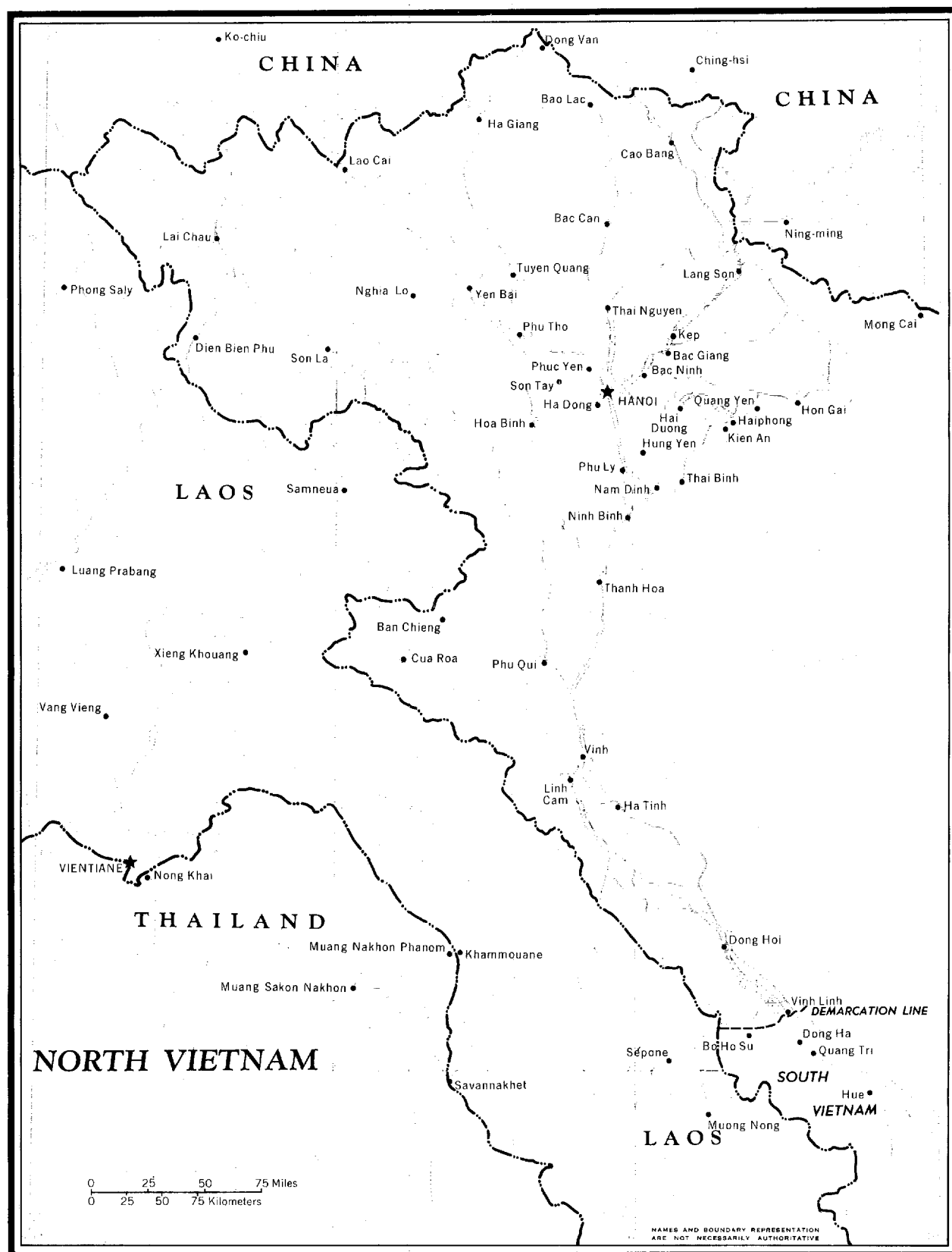
1. Recent photography and pilot reports have disclosed that the Communists have almost completed another major road from North Vietnam to Laos. This road--as yet unnumbered--starts at Route 101 in the DRV and follows a generally southwestern course into Laos where it intersects Route 911 at Ban Loum Poun. When finished, it will provide a completely new route from the DRV to Laos which could serve as an alternate for Mu Gia Pass. The new route could also allow freight brought down the coast by sea into the Dong Hoi area to be forwarded into Laos, thereby greatly reducing the distance that Laos-bound traffic must travel overland. Pilots have reported a continued build-up of defensive positions along the Laotian portion of the road, many of which now appear occupied. Both photography and pilot reports reveal that camouflaging trellises are being erected as soon as clearing operations permit in an apparent attempt to conceal subsequent construction activity and/or the alignment of the road. Once the rainy season commences the trellises should prove very effective in concealing the road.

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4. Preliminary analysis of drone photography
[redacted] indicates that a new SAM site is located some six miles northwest of Haiphong. No missiles were noted at this site, which, if confirmed, would be the 101st SAM site discovered to date.

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IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

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V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. North Vietnamese party first secretary Le Duan met today with Soviet party general secretary Brezhnev for talks. This was the first such meeting between the two men since Le Duan arrived in Moscow on 26 March for the 23rd Soviet party congress. A brief announcement of the meeting by Moscow TASS stated that "questions of mutual interest for both fraternal parties were discussed in a cordial and friendly conversation."

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VI. OTHER MAJOR ASPECTS

1. North Vietnam's official representation in Cambodia is being upgraded to the diplomatic level. The change was announced by Hanoi on 11 April, following the recent visit of the North Vietnamese minister of culture to Phnom Penh. The announcement did not indicate at what level Hanoi will be represented in Cambodia.

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It is not clear whether Cambodia will send a delegation to Hanoi.

2. North Vietnam's efforts to get full diplomatic recognition has foundered in recent years on Sihanouk's insistence that Hanoi agree to certain preconditions. These included accepting Cambodia's version of its borders and recognizing the special status of ethnic Cambodians living in South Vietnam. Despite various threats aimed at Saigon to grant full diplomatic recognition to Hanoi, Sihanouk has moved cautiously through the years in his dealings with North Vietnam. The current limited agreement apparently represents Sihanouk's attempt to establish closer relations with Hanoi without precipitating a riposte from Saigon.

3. The French Government has formalized its growing political ties with the North Vietnamese Government by raising the title of the DRV commercial representative in Paris to Delegate General. This move still stops short of diplomatic recognition but it does give the chief Vietnamese representative in Paris--who had previously acted on political matters without the title--the same official status that is afforded the French representative in Hanoi. The North Vietnamese have been anxious to upgrade their Paris trade representative and it has been rumored for several months that the French would oblige. On 5 April, North Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Duy Trinh agreed to the diplomatic upgrading and said that

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it would lead to "the development of relations in
all realms between the two governments."

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